

Affidavit in Support of a Search and Seizure Warrant

I, Dustin L. Rambacher, being duly sworn, deposes and states the following:

Agent Background

1. I am a Special Agent (SA) for the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (USPS OIG) and has been since 2011.
2. I am currently assigned to the USPS OIG Mid-Atlantic Area, Columbus, Ohio Field Office and I am an "investigative or law enforcement officer" within the meaning of 18 U.S.C. § 3061. That is, I am an officer of the United States who is empowered by law to conduct investigations and to make arrests for crimes involving postal offenses and civil matters relating to the postal service, to carry firearms; serve warrants; and subpoenas and make arrests and administer oaths as set forth in 39 U.S.C. § 1010.
3. As a USPS OIG SA, I am assigned to investigate crimes committed by postal employees involving postal offenses or other violations of federal laws regarding the Postal Service, property of the Postal Service, and the use of the mails, among others.
4. Also, I have been assigned to conduct investigations of internal theft, rifling, destruction, mistreatment, willful delay, or tampering of the U.S. Mail. I have training and experience in the enforcement of laws in the United States, including training on how to conduct mail theft, rifling, destruction, mistreatment, willful delay, and tampering related investigations, search and seizure laws, evidence handling and processing. As a result, I have successfully conducted multiple investigations of rogue postal employees engaged in the willful mistreatment or embezzlement of U.S. Mail, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1703, and 1709.
5. I am a graduate of the Criminal Investigator Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at Glynco, Georgia. I have a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Mount Union and a Master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati.
6. This affidavit is written in support and as part of an application for a search warrant to search the property described in Attachments A and B. The information contained in this affidavit is based on my personal knowledge and observations, on information conveyed to me by other individuals, including law enforcement officials and other personnel, as well as on my review of records, documents, and other physical evidence obtained. This affidavit only contains information necessary to support probable cause for a search warrant and is not intended to include every fact observed by your affiant or know to the government. The information in this affidavit is provided for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause for violations of 18 U.S.C. § 1703, Delay of Mail, and 18 U.S.C. § 1709, Theft of Mail committed by Albert Matthews III. Therefore, there is probable

cause to believe that a search of the property described in Attachments A and B, will reveal evidence of these crimes or fruits of these crimes as described in Attachment C.

7. The following contains information relevant to the location to be searched as described in Attachments A and B:

1030 Linwood Avenue, Columbus, OH 43206 is a two-story, single-family dwelling with brown brick, located on the east side of Linwood Avenue facing west. "1030" is clearly marked in light-colored numbers above the front door on the west side of the building. The main entrance is a white-colored door located on the west side of the building.

Facts in Support of Probable Cause

8. On February 3, 2023, the affiant interviewed a Postal Service customer who resides in Columbus, OH 43214, on City Route 20 (43214-C020) regarding a mail theft complaint. The customer stated that in January 2022, they contacted the Postal Service Columbus-Beechwold Station and reported to local management that they were not receiving some of their mail at their residence. The customer indicated that there were days they did not receive any mail, or they only received some of the mail listed in their daily Postal Service Informed Delivery email. The customer stated that they counted about 100 pieces of mail that they did not receive at their residence and the last time they did not receive mail they were expecting was in late January 2023.
9. Informed Delivery is a free optional USPS service that shows to residential customers preview images of incoming mail and status updates about incoming and outbound packages. This service emails notifications with pictures of mail that have been processed and which the Postal Service estimates will be delivered in the upcoming day(s). Informed Delivery letter mail images come from the local processing center after a sorting machine puts the mail into Delivery Point Sequence (DPS), or "walk sequence," which order the mail deliveries for the routes. DPS sortation is the last automated processing of a mail piece before it goes to the local post office for carrier delivery.
10. The Columbus-Beechwold Station is located at 4364 N. High Street, Columbus, OH 43214. The Columbus-Beechwold Station services ZIP Code 43214.
11. The affiant's review of postal databases revealed that Columbus-Beechwold Station City Carrier Albert Matthews III was the primary carrier on route 43214-C020 in January 2023. Matthews entered on duty with the Postal Service in January 2018. Postal Service records list Matthews' home address as 1030 Linwood Avenue, Columbus, OH 43206, in the Southern District of Ohio.
12. According to Franklin County, OH Auditor records, Matthews is listed as one of the owners of 1030 Linwood Avenue.

13. As part of the investigation, the affiant travelled to the area of 1030 Linwood Avenue and made general observations outside of Matthews' residence on March 1, 2023. During surveillance, the affiant noticed a red Honda sedan bearing Ohio license plate JUP1408 registered to Mathews parked at the rear of the property. Additionally, the affiant observed around five Postal Service mail tub containers sitting on the ground near the sedan and some fencing. The containers observed are the same the Postal Service uses to transport mail between facilities and that carriers use to deliver and collection mail.
14. On March 6, 2023, the affiant conducted a review of Postal Service customer complaint data to determine if other customers had reported not receiving their mail. In that review, the affiant identified various complaints in which the customers indicated they did not receive their mail on Matthews' route. Most of the complaints were filed by E. Beechwold Boulevard, Columbus, OH 43214 customers, which is the last street on Matthews' route.
15. As part of the investigation, the affiant also conducted a trash pull at 1030 Linwood Avenue on March 8, 2023. As a result of the trash pull, the affiant obtained the contents of the communal trash dumpster that is in the alley behind Matthews' residence. A review of the contents revealed approximately 1,662 pieces of mail that were found loose inside the dumpster. The mail recovered was dated between October 2022 and February 2023 and was addressed to locations in Columbus, OH 43214. Except for one piece, all of the mailings reviewed were addressed to delivery points on route 43214-C020, and most of the recovered mailings were for E. Beechwold Boulevard. Between the recovered mail were mailings addressed to customers who had previously filed mail theft complaints. Specifically, one of the recovered pieces was a Franklin County, OH Official Absentee Ballot mailing addressed to a delivery point on route 43214-C020. Additionally, with the recovered mail there were two loose Postal Service (PS) Form 3982 documents for carrier route 43214-C020 dated September 2022. A PS Form 3982 denotes change of address details for a carrier route. Inside a trash bag in the dumpster, USPS OIG agents found a piece of mail addressed to "Albert L. Matthews, 1030 Linwood Ave, Columbus, OH 43206," also a small bag bearing the name "A. Matthews." In another trash bag, USPS OIG agents found a couple of pieces of mail addressed to another residence in Matthews' neighborhood.
16. From training and experience, the affiant knows that rogue Postal Service employees who engage in willful theft, delay, or destruction of U.S. Mail often keep postal property and undelivered U.S. Mail in their residence or other buildings within the curtilage of the property.
17. Based on the foregoing facts and based on my training and experience, I believe that there is probable cause to believe that 1030 Linwood Avenue, Columbus, OH 43206 contains stolen and/or delayed U.S. Mail, or the fruits thereof, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1703 and 1709. Therefore, the affiant respectfully requests the Court to find probable cause to

issue a search warrant to search the location described in Attachments A and B for the items listed in Attachment C.

I hereby declare, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

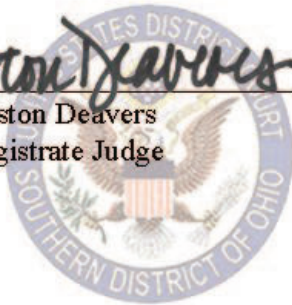


Dustin L. Rambacher
Special Agent
U.S. Postal Service
Office of Inspector General

Sworn and subscribed before me this 15th day of March 2023.



Elizabeth A. Preston Deavers
United States Magistrate Judge



Attachment A

1030 Linwood Avenue, Columbus, OH 43206 is a two-story, single-family dwelling with brown brick, located on the east side of Linwood Avenue facing west. "1030" is clearly marked in light-colored numbers above the front door on the west side of the building. The most convenient entrance is the white-colored door located on the west side of the building.

Attachment B



Attachment C

1. Any mail matter contained therein not addressed to Albert Matthews III and/or 1030 Linwood Avenue, Columbus, OH 43206;
2. U.S. Postal Service property;
3. The opening, search and removal, if necessary, of any safe or locked receptacle or compartment, as some or all of the property stolen may be maintained; and
4. Any other items which constitute fruits, evidence and/or instrumentalities of violations of 18, U.S.C. § 1703 and 1709.